

FOUR SERMONS

PREACHED IN THE

CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PETER'S,
MARITZBURG,

BY

THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF NATAL.

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A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PETER'S, MARITZBURG,

On Sunday Morning, September 16, 1866,

BY THE

RIGHT REVEREND THE LORD BISHOP OF NATAL.

ECCLES.xi.3.—*In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.*

You remember that the disciples once put this question to our Lord, 'Are there few that be saved?' and you remember also how he answered them—

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and not be able."

The question is one of those, which very naturally arise in our minds, when we begin to think of the Eternal World. Such questions, indeed, may arise from a mere idle curiosity. They often also characterize persons, who are more anxious to discuss the state of their neighbours' souls, to pass judgment upon them, than to watch the progress of their own—to rectify their own doings—to purify their own hearts and lives. Selfsatisfied and selfrighteous, a Pharisaical spirit, perfectly assured, as it supposes, of its own salvation, may wish to know whether there are few or many, who shall be admitted to a share of that bliss, which itself has no apprehension of missing—may make the enquiry, not because impelled to it by that human love which fills the breast, and makes us hope, that, if possible, all may be saved at last, but from a desire to find a clear warrant in the doings of the invisible world for that system of exclusiveness, which they have begun to practise here on earth. The question may have been put to our Lord on that occasion by one of

this class, or it may have been made, as I have said, out of mere curiosity.

But such speculations may take their rise from other feelings than these,—from the true yearnings, the deep necessities, of our nature as social beings. We cannot, as true men and women, live alone in the world. A selfish nature is a brutish nature—and hardly even that; for God has made the brute creatures, in their measure, to care for one another. But we are so constituted that we cannot, as human beings, live apart from our kind. We must take an interest in what concerns *their* welfare, in this world and in the next, as well as our own. Some ties are stronger than others—are stronger to the natural man: and yet even these, we feel, must give way at times to the claims of duty, in the service of our country and our race. The soldier leaves home and its delights to expose his life to danger in defence of his fellow-countrymen, in the maintenance of his country's honor or her laws. The missionary, in a kindred spirit, goes out to fight another kind of warfare, in the service of the same supreme Lord, and obeys the inward voice which prompts him to carry the light of life, at God's command, into the dark and dismal haunts of heathenism. But not only in such fields as these, but in a thousand others, in all the various walks of life, are we called upon to sacrifice our own will, our own interests, to "lay down our lives for our brethren." The commonest path of duty will find such work for us, if we are ready to do it; and multitudes there are whose faith in this way "worketh by love," in many a Christian home, without attracting human observation, unscen by all but God.

We all know that such lives as these are the most truly human lives, most worthy of living men, of servants of Christ, of sons of God—that such a feeling of brotherhood with others, who are not closely bound to us by ties of flesh and blood, is not merely the passion of the enthusiast, but one of the highest attributes of our nature. We reckon those among the greatest and best of men, who have shown most of this spirit. But, so thinking for our brethren, so labouring, and, if need be, suffering for them, we cannot help also casting forward an imagination to the unseen world beyond the grave. "Are there many that shall be saved?" Shall we meet together, in the realms of light, with the multitudes of our fellowmen, with whom, for whom,

we have lived and laboured upon earth? Shall *all* the members of any one family be blessed to enter that bright abode, and no one link be wanting in the family circle? And, if all of them in this generation shall be admitted, shall none of the next be shut out? Shall *my* child be there, and *my brother's* absent? Shall my son or daughter be there, and his or her loved one be lost eternally? Will there, then, in another world, be no remembrance or regret of those whom we have loved in this, and who are dead to us and ours for evermore? Or is there room in our Father's House for *all*? Through discipline, it may be, most dire and terrible, for those that have grievously stained themselves with spots of sin, is it possible that in this world or in the next the guilty stains may be removed, and each vessel be cleansed at last for the Master's use?

Such thoughts as these, and others like them, must every now and then present themselves to serious minds. And we cannot condemn them; they are the natural offspring of our best human affections, of those very affections which God Himself has given us,—of those affections, blessed be God! which in the Son of Man, and in each one of us his followers, bear witness of the Divine Perfections, of that Image of God in which we were made. And, doubtless, whether in the spirit of the speaker in the Gospel or not, we have each of us felt at times the impulse to ask, 'Are there many that shall be saved?' And to us also, as to him, the Master's voice gives no direct and clear reply. It is not God's Will to reveal to us fully in this world the mysteries of the next. We have hints given us abundantly to cheer and comfort us in regard to them. We know that a true earthly father, one whose character most nearly corresponds to the Divine Image, will not abandon a prodigal child, will yearn for it and love it and labour for it to the last. We are sure also that, where one good thought still lingers in the bosom of a man, there is God's Spirit working, and, where God's Spirit is, there also is life and hope. We know, too, that our Lord has told us that, while there is indeed a deep joy in heaven, a calm and settled joy of complacency, over the ninety-and-nine walking faithfully and lovingly in the daily path of duty, there is also a special joy, a burst of exultation, among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth—there is joy in the heart of God Himself, like that with which the single lost sheep of the flock is found, after long and weary

searching, by him who owns it. And, in speaking thus, we are sure our Lord spoke the very Mind of the Father Himself who dwelt in him. We know that every word and act of tender pity which he exhibited, showed forth the Father's Love to us,—as we know also that, if the mind that was in Christ be in us, if we too pity, as he pitied, the wandering lost sheep of God's Flock, and would lay down our lives to save them, we are each in our measure showing forth to man that Divine Love of God Himself, with which our own hearts are filled out of His Fulness. *We* could not pity and love our fellowman, however fallen, if God did not love him, and move our hearts by His Spirit towards him. And, even if our hearts are cold and selfish, selfrighteous and Pharisaical,—if we are too much taken up with our own concerns, to heed the poor traveller, that lies stripped and bleeding on life's highway,—if we are ready to pass by on the other side and leave him to perish,—yet some despised Samaritan shall come by, filled with a Divine compassion, shall bind up his wounds and speak the words of brotherly love, and comfort, and hope; and that one tender gush of human feeling—the yearning effort made by some pitying soul to turn the poor sinner's eyes upon his squalid bed of pain to his long-forsaken Home,—the drop of water, the water of life, dropped for the love of God and Man upon the parched tongue of some miserable felon, perishing of drought in his cell,—even this shall be enough to witness to us of that all-embracing Love, from which alone such Goodness flows.

Still the full answer to our question is not given. “We are saved by hope.” The secrets of the Unseen World are still hidden from us—“Behind the Vail! Behind the Vail!” We can but lay to heart the lesson taught us in the words, with which our Lord silenced this questioning of his disciples:

“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

“Strive to enter in at the strait gate.” Our own work is set before each one of us plainly enough. We cannot enter into God's kingdom by merely sitting down with folded hands and wishing to enter it. Our lives must be in earnest—our spirits braced up to their daily duties. We must realize that life is given to us for a purpose—to glorify God by serving our fellowmen. We must leave the case of others in the hands of our Almighty Loving Father, and see that we each do faithfully our own daily part in life. As an

earthly parent deals with his children, so will He do with us. As a loving earthly father may see good to correct a negligent or unruly child, by refusing to see it for a season, by shutting it out, so long as he thinks it right and needful, from the joy and brightness of the family circle, while yet his own heart is saddened, and that family joy is dimmed, by the loss of that one member, and father and children all are yearning with tenderest longings for the hour of his return, so may our Father in Heaven see good to banish His sinful child for a while into that outer darkness, to rise up and shut the door upon the undutiful and disobedient: and "they shall seek to enter in and not be able,"—until He Himself in His own good time sees fit again to open it. But they are children still, and He a Father. An evil-minded earthly parent may correct with passion and violence—may even dislike and hate his child, while he scourges him—may cast him off and abandon him altogether. But, the more true and tender and loving a man is, the more deeply will he love his child—even his erring, wilful, disobedient child. The more nearly that father resembles God in goodness, the more certain we shall be that in all his severest chastisements his heart is yearning over his child,—that he has already forgiven it, he is only chastening for its good and not for vengeance, he is only longing for its recovery and restoration, and, on the first sign of true repentance, will be ready to welcome its return with tears and thanksgiving. If, then, the *best* men will thus love their children, with a love which nothing but death itself can quench, we have here a sure sign—faint though it must be at the best—of the Fatherly neverfailing Love of God to *all* His children.

Again, we know that one of the strongest arguments for a future state of existence is drawn by the greatest moralists from the fact that, up to the last moment of our lives in this world, our *spiritual* powers are usually as bright and strong as ever. These, for instance, are the words of Bishop Butler:

In many diseases, persons the moment before death appear to be in the highest vigour of life. They discover apprehension, reason, memory, all entire, with the utmost force of affection, sense of a character, of shame and honour, and the highest mental enjoyments and sufferings,—even to the last gasp; and these surely prove even greater vigour of life than bodily strength does. Now what pretence is there for thinking that a progressive disease, when arrived to such a degree,—I mean that degree which is mortal,—will destroy these powers which were not impaired, which were not affected, by it, during its whole progress, quite up to that degree?

But this argument embraces also all the best affections of our nature,—those which bind us to one another as members of families, as members of communities, as members of one race. We have no ground for supposing that death will put an end to *these affections*, will quench that warmth of love to our kindred and our kind, which glows within us—and glows most brightly within the hearts of the best and truest of men—even to the last moment of life. And, if we shall love in the world to come as we love here, if any recollections of the present life shall follow us there, if it is impossible to believe that all the scenes in which we have taken part in this life, the memory of which is stamped indelibly upon our minds and constitutes a portion of our very being, shall pass away altogether from us, as if they had never been, and leave not a trace behind of their true nature,—if we must believe that we shall know and be known in the world beyond the grave, by those with whom we have been mingled in this life in closest intercourse for good, or alas! for evil,—should we not feel the most bitter pang at finding some one of those, whom we have loved most dearly, shut out for ever and ever from the home where we ourselves are securely dwelling? Will it comfort me to know that my children are there, but my brother's children, or my children's children, are missing? Will *my* joy be pure and perfect, if *my child's* is wrung with the pang of unutterable anguish, for *her* child lost to her, as some teach, for ever?

This chain of reasoning evidently links together in one great family all the members of the human race. The pang felt by one must, like an electric current, be circulated through all,—through the ties of relationship, if indeed we all spring from one common pair,—but, if not, then through the bonds of our common spiritual nature, as all children of the same Blessed God. And thus again we are encouraged to entertain a “hidden hope” for all,—when God's chastisements shall have done their work effectually. The mother can face this thought, of her child being cast out for a season, if God sees good, while His Love is chastening, correcting, and purifying, His watchful care is still surrounding,—while she trusts that His Mighty Arm shall one day bring back the penitent prodigal, humbled and purged, to her embrace. We can die in hope, and leave our children thus to be dealt with by Him, who is Wisdom and Goodness itself; or we can live on and work in cheerful trust, and carry

out calmly the command to strive that we enter in ourselves at the strait gate,—not asking ‘Are there many that shall be saved?’—but seeking this day to do our duty in God’s sight, speaking this day the words of truth and right, “casting our bread upon the waters,” sowing the good seed morning and evening, in the spirit of that ancient Hebrew moralist, who says in the text—

“If clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth; and, if the tree fall toward the south or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there shall it be.”

There are indeed few words of Scripture, which have been more completely misapplied, and wrested from their true meaning, than these. They are frequently quoted as having reference to death and the eternal judgment. “As the tree falls,” you may hear it said, “so will it be”: as a man dies, so will his state of woe or blessedness be fixed for ever. The truth is, however, that these words have really nothing whatever to do with death or judgment. If we look at the context, we shall see this at once. And we shall see also that, rightly understood, the lesson we are here taught is most instructive and edifying.

The words are intended in the first instance, to commend the exercise of kindness and charity, large, liberal, unrestrained,—not indeed rash and wasteful, but still without a close and niggardly calculation of consequences. We are to trust God, and God’s commands, and God’s overruling and directing Providence, and not our own narrow-minded wisdom, which is very often a mere pretence for selfishness. “Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days;”—that is, apparently, let thy good deeds go down the stream of life, be lost sight of, it may be, and forgotten—by thyself, at all events: “let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.” Perhaps, many of thy kindest words and deeds may to all appearance have been spent without any result of good. Yet no single act of love is wasted in God’s Moral Universe; not a cup of cold water, given for love’s sake, shall be without its reward; and, though thou servest not for pay, but, out of free love to God and Man, layest down thy life for the brethren, the life which thou now lovest thou shall save unto Life Eternal: thou shalt find thy bread again after many days.

“Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth,”—

nor whether thou mayest not some day need that help, which it is now thy duty and privilege to minister to others.

“ If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth ”:

and thou, if thou art full of God’s good things, whatever be the gifts with which thy Maker, the Father of all, has blessed thee, pour them out freely in like manner upon thy brethren, after His Example—

“ who makes the sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sends His rain upon the just and the unjust.”

Be careful, as “ good stewards of the manifold grace of God ”: as faithful servants, you must not squander and waste your Lord’s goods. But let your charity be limited only by the sense of duty to God, the Bountiful Giver of all, and not by any selfish desires of your own. For look again at God’s ways !

“ If the tree fall toward the south or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth there shall it be : ”—

just as God’s wind directeth it, so will it fall, and so will it lie. And so give thou thy words of truth, thy deeds of kindness, to the winds of Heaven, and let the Breath of God direct them where and how to fall upon the hearts of men.

‘ He that observeth the wind, shall not sow ; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.’

Do thy duty day by day, whatever wind may blow, whatever sunshine or storm may be overhead.

‘ As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all : ’

thou knowest not the secret workings of His Providence, the Wisdom of His Will.

‘ Therefore in the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand ; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.,

It is plain, then, that these words of the text, as I said, have nothing whatever to do with death or judgment. They teach us rather what to do in *life* ; they teach us to be “ not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” They teach us that the one great business for each of us in life is to do God’s Will in our daily work amidst our fellowmen, whether in deeds of kindness, or in any other course of duty,—without stopping to calculate the exact amount of good that may result from it, the personal gain or advantage, or the returns of

gratitude and goodwill, which they may bring baek into our own bosoms. Duties are ours—to be always ready at God's call to speak and act for Him in this world,—whether in private, among the members of our own family and household, or in public among our friends and fellowmen,—whether by quiet words of counsel or of comfort, or, if need be, by sterner words of remonstrance and reproof, yet the words still of one who speaks the truth in love. It is ours to be sowing the seed of life continually, as God shall give us opportunity, with hope or against hope, in season or out of season. In due time He will not withhold His Blessing. Each single act of faith and love, though seemingly lost among men,—though provoking, it may be, their scorn and enmity, as did the words and acts of him who meekly wore the crown of thorns,—shall yet bear fruit in some way or other, to the glory of Him in whose strength it was wrought, and shall be found again, though it be 'after many days.'

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PETER'S, MARITZBURG,

On Sunday Evening, September 16, 1866,

BY THE

RIGHT REVEREND THE LORD BISHOP OF NATAL.

1COR.I.30,31.—*But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption: that, according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.*

WE see from the very first the Church of Christ splitting itself into sects and parties. Even while their Master was with them, we know that his disciples disputed who should lead, who should be the greatest among them, when one would have thought that the presence of such a Master and Teacher would have repressed in them all thought of self, except the one desire to be nearest to him, to sit at his feet, to share most of his instructions, or the more generous longing to be foremost in duty at his command, most faithful in service, to see him satisfied, to hear him say, "Well said! Well done!"

In thinking of the state of the Apostolic Band, when they had no more the sensible presence of their Lord among them, we are apt to imagine that their love for him must surely have become so exalted and intensified, their whole being so spiritualised, by the close intercourse which they had enjoyed with him during his earthly ministry, by the communication of his spirit to them, that they must have been bound together in the strictest unity,—that all their thoughts and feelings, as well as their worldly goods, must have been in common,—that one single aim—to spread his Gospel—to advance his Kingdom—must have taken the

place of every separate, selfish, consideration. And this is, indeed, the Ideal of the Christian Church: this is what the Church should be. But, if it was ever realised, it must have been but for a very little while, when their hearts were bowed and crushed, and all their worldly fancies dissipated for a time, by the overpowering sense of their bereavement. That 'new Jerusalem,' descending out of heaven from God, has only come down to Earth by flashes, as it were, in glimpses. It has been shown to favored mortals at happy moments, as a "pattern," a "thing in the heavens,"—not to make us impatient of the shortcomings of this earthly life, but to cheer us on to work unweariedly towards it, as a standard ever to be kept in view. There ought, assuredly, to be a spirit of unity, a spirit of charity, pervading the whole Church of Christ, which will enable us to welcome the signs of God's Spirit, "all things true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report," wherever we see them. If we indeed love God who begat, we ought to love also whatsoever is begotten of Him, in whomsoever we may find it, in or out of our own small circle, our own sect, our own Church.

But we see in the writings of St. Paul himself—the most undoubtedly authentic of all the precious relics of that early age—how far even in his day the Church had already departed from this unity of heart and feeling, this all-embracing charity. We see how amongst the Corinthian Christians parties or sects were formed under various teachers, the union of whose members rested upon their holding certain intellectual notions, certain dogmas or creeds, which those teachers severally maintained,—dogmas, which, if they did not actually exclude each other, yet received an undue prominence, some in the discourses of one teacher, some in those of another, according to the peculiar bias of his mind, whether to the old traditional Judaism of Peter, or to the more liberal, and in those days, more *modern*, views of Paul,—whether towards the Greek Philosophy, or towards the Hebrew Law and Prophets. And so there were "contentions among them": and "one said, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, and another, I am of Cephas, and another, I am of Christ." And they were very bitter contentions: there was "envying, strife, and divisions among them," the apostle says: they were walking as carnal, not as spiritually minded,—as babes, not as men.

And the truth is, that any union, which is founded on mere *intellectual* agreement, must be narrow; it must be temporary and shifting, as the minds of men are differently constituted, as they move with different degrees of rapidity along the paths of thought. Such a union as this can never be a basis for the kingdom of God,—for that kingdom which we believe is to be set up upon the earth,—for that Church which is to embrace the whole world. A union founded on a forced intellectual agreement, on the imposition of a certain creed, the same for every degree of enlightenment,—such as the good old Fathers dreamed of in the days gone by, when they met in Synods and Councils, to lay down formulæ which were to bind all future ages, and for some trifling difference of opinion, for a mere dispute about a letter of a creed, anathematised and excommunicated the minority as heretics, though numbering among them men meek, merciful, and pure in heart and life, even as themselves, men whom their Master would have called “blessed,”—such a union, I say, as this, is a false, a dead, union, a union in death, stagnating all life, the precursor of corruption.

Yet there is a real union possible among true-hearted men as followers of Christ—a union in spirit amongst those who come to the Father as revealed to us through Christ, through his divine teaching, through the revelation which he has made to us of the Father’s Love in life and in death,—among those who recognize thus the Son of Man in his blessed ministry as the way to the Father, who take up the Cross as their badge, who look to it as the explanation of the perplexed enigma of this earthly life, as symbolizing in one sign the Christian’s watchword, “Love made perfect through suffering.” The heart of man, in its best moments, craves for the Cross—though the flesh shrinks from it. The merest child, who clings to the thought of a wise and loving Father, is ready to embrace it; the self-righteous and self-sufficient, who despise their fellow-creatures, and think to mount upwards by steps laid by their own superior powers and virtues, look down upon it with contempt.

For, truly, the great *Idea* of Christianity, that in him, the Son of Man,—the obscure child of an obscure family, in a despised portion of a subject people, a people powerless, contemptible, in the eyes of the proud masters of the world,—that in him, I say, God’s Truth, God’s Love, God’s glorious Excellency, the Goodness of the eternal Father who “dwelt

in him," was revealed to man, and in like manner is even now being revealed in our measure by each one of us, the very humblest and weakest of his followers, if we also dwell in love, and so "dwell in God, and God in us,"—the great idea, I say, of Christianity, — yes, and its great *Symbol*, the Cross, shame and pain and personal extinction in the ministry of love, in the utterance of truth, in the discharge of duty, the sense of abandonment by man,—seemingly by God also, it may be,—yet this too borne willingly, meekly, with only love and pity for others on the sufferer's lips,—these things are not mere dogmas to be received or rejected by the intellect, to be the shibboleths of a party, to be the insignia of a worship, to be announneed to the outer world by threats of vengeance for the unbeliever, to be expressed for the "faithful" by gorgeous ceremonials, vestments, proessions, pomps, and vanities. The depth of meaning involved in that Idea, the power of that divine Symbol, must be realised by the heart, and their influence expressed in the daily life, before we can truly call ourselves Christians, before we can understand the apostle's words, "Christ in us, the hope of glory."

How far, indeed, have the elaborate creeds of Christendom, dogma upon dogma, piled up into the clouds of mysticism, gone beyond that one pure and perfect revelation, that God is indeed "our Father in Heaven"—*our* Father—the very Father of all mankind—that—

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing our trespasses unto us,"—

that God was in Christ,—and is now in every true follower of Christ, in every thought of tender pity and love which swells our hearts for our brethren, downtrodden and oppressed by evil,—manifesting forth His Love to all, showing Himself to be the Father of the spirits of all flesh, of every forlorn, solitary, human being,—hearing every sigh, even as Jesus said, "He heareth me always,"—sighs of ours for our sinning brother, sighs of the sinner for himself,—not easting off that sad and lonely one because of his sins, his misery and guilt,—but having already in His heart forgiven him, as the father in the Gospel, who ran to meet his wayward child, and fell upon his neck with tears and kisses! Are any of you too conseious of your own unworthiness, of your sins and sinful infirmities, to dare to look up to the excellent glory? Behold! if you believe in Jesus, in his

testimony concerning the Father,—if you believe that in his life of love the Love of God was pouring out itself to man, and streams forth still in every act of true love which *we* show to one another,—why, then you must be sure, that as he claimed in God's Name the publican and sinner as member's of God's Family, so you too, with all your faults, are looked upon by the Heavenly Father as brethren of Christ and children of God.

And "all things are of God," remember, "who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." Not only the message of His Love, which Christ has brought to us, but the power to believe in it, is of God,—that movement of the heart which induces you and me, in the sense of our sinfulness, to say 'I will arise and go to my Father,' to throw ourselves at His Feet and cry, 'I am not worthy to be called Thy child,'—that readiness, too, when His gracious Hand shall raise us, and draw us to His Bosom, to take the Cross which He gives us to bear, and, instead of wishing to live any longer selfish lives for our own satisfaction, to go thankfully and do our part, whatever it may be, in filling up, as the apostle says, "that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ,"—in finishing the work which yet remains to be done on earth for the good of our brethren. Yes! as the text says, "Of *Him* are we in Christ Jesus." It is God by His Spirit, who works such conviction as this in the hearts of men. Mere following of preachers, adherence to parties and sects, a zeal for what we deem to be orthodoxy, violent denunciation of those who differ,—*this* is not Christianity; there is no sign of the work of God's Spirit *here*. To be 'in Christ' is to be built up in the spirit of Christ, to be one with him in that spiritual building, of which he is the chief corner-stone, and which consists of the meek and lowly, the pure and loving, the speakers of truth, the doers of righteousness, whatever their Church or their Creed may be. And "of *Him* are we in Christ Jesus." Not Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas—not this or that Teacher or Pastor—not the Bible—not the Priest—not the Church—but God Himself, our Heavenly Father, has made us what we are, if we are true Christians, has given us that living faith, that filial spirit of trust and obedience, by which we are truly one with Christ,—

"who of God is made unto us Wisdom, both Righteousness and Sanctification and Redemption."

He is "made of God unto us," says the epistle—what he is. If we go to Christ himself to explain his mission, to expound for us the mystery—how it is that from such antecedents a light has arisen, which has brightened the world, which has shone like a central sun upon mankind ever since, whose beams have shed comfort and hope in the darkest and lowest quarters, the most forlorn and miserable spots of humanity, and have been also the guiding star of the most profound philosophy, have helped to form, or at least to modify, all social institutions,—he will say to us, as he did to the Jews,—

"I am not come of myself, but He—that is, the Father—hath sent me"; "the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me"; "as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do."

But, even without such plain words as these, we need not have doubted whether so good and perfect a gift to poor, wandering, lost humanity, as the teaching, the life, the death, of that holy and loving one, were indeed from God, the Father of lights, were glimpses of His Goodness, were meant to shine upon the path that leads us onward to our Home. Man cannot by searching find out God. God must come down, as it were, and hold out a helping hand to His creature, whose every breath of spiritual, as well as of bodily, life, is drawn by virtue of His Presence and Aid, His creating, life-giving, life-sustaining power. Without Him, 'in whom we live and move and have our being,' physically, we know, we should all fall instantly back into nothingness, from which His Word, His Spirit, has drawn us. And shall our inner, higher, diviner life, that life which we have not as His creatures merely but as his children, be less dependent on His Will and Power and Wisdom? Nay, surely each word of truth is a message to our souls from the God of Truth. And even now God is building us up in Christ Jesus—is seeking to form in us more and more of the filial spirit which becomes His children—by those gracious words of every kind which He is still speaking to us, by the revelations of the present age as well as of the past. We must not for a moment lose sight of the fact that "*all things are of God*,"—the discoveries of Science, which come in these our days by God's Will to modify so many of our former religious notions, as well as that manifestation of the Divine Love, which Christ "of God was made" to be unto us, and which we shall not receive, as God meant us to

receive it, unless blended also with the light of our own times.

But in "Christ Jesus," says the Apostle, was shown forth especially God's "Wisdom." God's mode of blessing His spiritual creatures upon earth with what they need is so wise, so powerful, and yet so utterly different from man's expectations! The Jews, we know, looked for a great Messiah, coming with a strong hand and a stretched-out arm, to redeem them from evil—to show forth the Might and Majesty of God working on their behalf with signs and wonders: and to them the cross of Christ was a "stumbling-block." It is still so to many who reject Christianity, because it has not swept away at once, as with a flood, the various social plagues and evils which still beset the world. And the same mistaken estimate of the nature of Christ's kingdom was entertained by many in the early ages of the Church, who heaped in their traditions miracle on miracle upon the life of Christ, the Apostles, the Virgin, and the Saints,—as if a mighty wonder was so sure a token of the Presence of God's Spirit, or had such a power to convince and subdue the heart, as one single word of truth, one act of love! It still lingers in the minds of others even in these days, who expect from some great event "coming with observation," such as the visible appearing of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven, a renewal of the whole moral and social universe, the setting-up of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, amongst men. No! "he shall reign"—but not by such means as these. The kingdom of God in men's hearts,—love, self-renunciation, for the cause of truth, for the cause of our fellowman,—the kingdom of the Crucified,—can never be set up from without, by signs and wonders, by outward evidences of pomp and power,—that kingdom which is "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It must grow up within the heart. It deals in secret with each individual soul and conscience, not outwardly with masses, by the storm, the earthquake, and the fire, but by the still-small voice—bringing each of us, one by one, out of our own little sphere, in which we were revolving on ourselves, into God's great harmonious universe, making us members in that mystical body, which is "the blessed company of all faithful people."

But, if to the Jews the Cross of Christ was a stumbling-block, to the Greeks it was "foolishness." "The Jew

sought after a sign, and the Greek after wisdom." And one would have said that to seek after wisdom was the highest object that man could have,—that it was the exact correlative to his highest duty, to "bear witness to the Truth,"—that the ambassador from God would be most gladly received and welcomed by those, who were "seeking after God, if haply they might find Him." And so, indeed, it would be, if the love of Truth were not so rare even amongst those who profess to be searching for it,—if, at least, it were not so rare to find it pure and undefiled,—if it were not so apt to become mixed with other lower motives, to become lost in prepossessions and prejudices. It is so in our own day, and it was so, doubtless, with many of those Greeks. If Socrates, indeed, or Plato, had been alive when Paul stood on Mars' Hill, how joyfully, we may believe, would he have welcomed the substance of the apostle's message, even if he had disputed, as perhaps he would have disputed, about some of the details of it! But the Greek philosophers generally of St. Paul's time, in the arrogance of intellectual superiority, were careless of a divine message, such as that of the Gospel of Christ, which was not expressed in the language of their schools, which did not deal with lofty metaphysical abstractions, which spoke of a crucified man as the Brother and Lord and Leader of men, which spoke of the Cross, as the badge of God's children, the Cross now sanctified to our eyes, as an emblem of the most sublime morality, but which to them was merely the instrument of a felon's death. They turned with contempt from a teaching, which was not built upon argument, but upon the mere outward conviction of the preacher, and was addressed not to the learned few, the wise, the scribes, the disputers of this world, but to all, to the many whom they despised, as much as to themselves. Such a message they set down at once as "foolishness."

But yet the "foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men"; and to those, who do truly receive the Divine Message in the Gospel, it is in very deed "the Power of God and the Wisdom of God." It is the *Wisdom* of God, says the apostle—because it does that which nothing else, that we can conceive of, could have done: it shows forth *God's Love to us in human action*; it brings home the proofs of that Love to all that hear it—to the poorest, and humblest, and most ignorant,

as well as to the highest and wisest. To know that in every word of grace which Christ spoke, in every act of kindness which he did, in every emotion of pity which he showed, the Love of God was manifested, the Love of the Father who dwelt in him, with whose Spirit he was filled, that was indeed a proof that the human race, notwithstanding all their faults, shortcomings, provocations, have not been forsaken, abandoned, cast off, by their Heavenly Father. To hear that holy and loving one, fresh from his prayers, from his close communion with God, declare in his Father's Name forgiveness to the trembling sinner, "Neither do I condemn thee—go, and sin no more,"—bind up the broken-hearted, soothe the mourner, cheer on the faithful to bear the cross after him even unto death, to see him still, even unto the end, loving, forgiving, triumphing in dying, this is the means which the Wisdom of God has provided for us, that we may know the Mind of God Himself towards us, from whom the Saviour brought each word of truth and love he uttered. This is God's method of declaring forgiveness to us, of sending glad tidings, of publishing peace. In this way we have received the at-one-ment, the reconciliation, the plainest proof that our iniquities are pardoned, that God has made us at-one with Himself through the Son of His Love.

And so St. Paul says, Christ is made of God unto us—"Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption."

(i) We need "*Righteousness*"—to feel that we are counted righteous before God—that we are regarded by Him as children—unworthy, it may be, disobedient, prodigal—yet still children, children of our Father's House, children of His heart, not miserable outcasts. And see how in Christ this Righteousness is given us. We know by Christ's words and deeds that we are loved, that God loves us, that God's Spirit dwells with men, that God is one with us, as a Father with His children. The proofs of God's Presence with us, as a Father and Friend, are indeed on every side of us: the green earth, and the blue sky, the wayside flower, the running brook, all bring a message to the thoughtful heart from Him who is not far from any one of us. But as moral and spiritual creatures, sensible of our many sins, our breaches of God's Laws, our provocations of His Displeasure, we need something more than this to establish our hearts in peace before him. And this He has given us in Christ:

and, if the Mind that was in Christ be ours, He gives it also even now in all *our* ministry of love to one another. Each man or woman or child, who helps to bear another's burden, and so fulfils the law of Christ,—every true Christian who goes forth daily in God's Name, filled with His Spirit, to cast some bread upon the waters, to speak some word of truth or do some act of brotherly-love,—those above all, who in different paths of duty are patiently, courageously, "bearing the cross," enduring hardships for love's sake, "laying down their lives for the brethren,"—all these are witnessing, each in his measure, of the Father's Favor and Forgiveness to all, are assuring us that, however sinful in ourselves, we are yet accounted righteous before God, are dealt with as children, as "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty."

(ii) But God has provided for us also in this way "*Sanctification*," says the apostle. We have now the strongest possible motives to holiness of life. We know that God loves us and cares for us, that He has called us with a holy calling, in order that we may be conformed to His Likeness, that He has set before us an Image of that perfection in the life of Jesus our Lord, and sets before us now a thousand bright examples of what true men and women should be, in the lives of those who have gone before us, or who are treading with us the path of life. And we know also that His Spirit is with us now, as it was with the holy men of old, by whose gracious influences our souls are daily quickened, checked in the thought of evil, prompted to what is good. Shall we grieve our Heavenly Father anymore by continuance in what we know to be wrong? Shall we not strive to be "followers of God as dear children"? Since He has reconciled us to Himself by His Messages of Love, shall we not lift up our hearts with holy joy and thankfulness, and be reconciled to Him, be at-one with the Blessed God?

(iii) Yes! for we have also "*Redemption*" provided for us in the Gospel of Christ—complete deliverance from the power of evil. We *can* conquer our besetting sins in the strength of this faith. Though often foiled in the struggle, heart sore, it may be, at times, and weary, yet, assured of God's Fatherly Love, of God's ever-present help, we *can* arise again, and strive, until we shall beat down our enemy under our feet. And then, in the sense of our own deliverance, we shall long to lend a helping hand to others in the great conflict. Instead of being ourselves the thralls and

slaves of sin, we shall stand up in the joyous freedom of God's children, and go forth at His bidding to liberate others, to break the iron fetters of sin and ignorance, to bring light to those that sit in darkness, "to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Thus 'all things are of God,' all love, all strength, all blessing — whose "Wisdom" has provided for us in the Gospel "Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption." Wherefore "let him that glorieth glory in the Lord." Let us put all our trust in Him, in His Love for us—not in our Creeds and Rites and Formularies — not in our Books, even the Best of Books—not in our Minister, our Sect, our Church, but in the Living God Himself who truly loves us. And let us hope that, as the only Wise God our Saviour, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, his Father and our Father, his God and our God, is better known, more worthily adored, among the children of men, a wider, more comprehensive, charity *will* at last be found among us —so that all minor differences, all varieties in our modes of worship, even in our articles of belief, will be deemed of infinitely less importance than that common bond of faith and love, which binds us all to the footsteps of His Throne. There are signs, we trust, even now, of the increase of this spirit in the great religious movement of the present age, notwithstanding the doubts and fears of many, the opposition of some, the occasional bursts of violence with which it must needs be accompanied. There are signs that a brighter day is beaming on mankind than the world has yet seen—of a day when the true Christian spirit shall reign among us, the spirit that embraces lovingly all truth, all goodness, wherever it is found,—under the influence of which human teachers, prophets, messengers, will be lost sight of and forgotten in their message, in the glory they reflect from Him in whose name they come, and men will say no more, "I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos, and I am of Cephas," for their whole souls shall be at-one with Christ—shall be full of God.

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A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PETER'S, MARITZBURG,

On Sunday Morning, October 21, 1866,

BY THE

RIGHT REVEREND THE LORD BISHOP OF NATAL.

HAB.ii.4.—*Behold! his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.*

IN the Greek translation of the Bible, which we call the Septuagint Version, the words of the text are rendered as follows:—

“If he shall draw back, my soul hath no pleasure in him: but the just shall live by faith in me.”

This is only one of the innumerable instances in which the Greek translation differs, (and often differs materially as here,) from the Hebrew from which our English Version is made,—a fact this which, when once fully appreciated, must shake to the ground the whole popular notion of the absolute infallibility of Scripture,—at least of the English Bible as we have it. For that Bible, as I have said, is translated from the Hebrew; and, if correctly translated, which it frequently is not, yet it manifestly presents only one form of the sacred text, as it existed in the days of the Greek translators, three centuries before Christ. It is plain that they must have had before them a very different copy of the Hebrew original from that which we now possess. And what is most important in this matter is this, that the quotations made in the New Testament from the ancient Scriptures are habitually taken from the Septuagint, or at all

events they correspond with this much more closely than with the Hebrew. Thus in the Epistle to the Hebrews we find the text of the prophet Habbakkuk now before us quoted as follows, x.38:—

“Now the just shall live by faith; but, if he draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him”—

which is almost identical with the Greek version, except that the order of the clauses is inverted. Hence some excellent persons, who wish to maintain the traditionary view, have held that the Greek translation, having thus the clear sanction of apostolic authority, must be regarded as representing the infallible Word of God more truly than the Hebrew. But the fact is that the New Testament writers do not adhere strictly even to this version. St. Paul, in particular, often appears to quote the ancient Scriptures very freely, modifying their expressions not unfrequently to suit his present argument, giving often the substance, not a literal copy, of the original, appealing to the spirit, not to the letter, of a passage, and showing thus that he did not himself hold that extravagant view of the Divine Infallibility of every line and letter of the Bible, which so many in our own times have thought it necessary to maintain.

In two other passages of the New Testament a portion of the text before us is quoted by St. Paul himself, as a kind of summary of Christian Doctrine, expressing in a compact form the very essence of the Gospel, in opposition to the principles maintained by the teachers of the Mosaic Law. In one place, Rom.i.17, he says—

“For therein—that is, in the Gospel—is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, *The just shall live by faith.*”

In another, Gal.iii.11,12, he writes—

‘But, that no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God, is evident: for, *The just shall live by faith.* And the Law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.’

But the fact is that the Hebrew Prophet does not say ‘The just shall live by faith,’ as here translated, but ‘The just shall live by his truth—by his faithfulness—by patient continuance in well doing.’ He was writing at a time not long before the Babylonish Captivity, when great troubles were evidently impending, and the hearts of the righteous were made sad by the impurities which abounded around them, and an arrogant selfconfidence possessed generally the hearts of the Jewish people. The prophet delivers a word

of reproof to these highminded and careless transgressors—‘Behold! his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him’—and of encouragement to the meek and true-hearted—‘but the just shall live by his faithfulness.’ The two expressions, however, of the Prophet and the Apostle, though seemingly diverse, are so far from contradicting each other that they throw light, from different sides, as it were, upon one and the same object. Their agreement is well expressed in those other words of the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, where, speaking of Moses, he says, “*he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.*” There can be no true faithfulness, without faith. Those who live by sight, by sense, are liable to continual change. They cannot be trusted to persevere in one steady consistent course, to be faithful to themselves, to be true to their calling, to confess before the opposing world their God and Saviour, to quell the flesh, to resist the Devil. This “faithfulness”—this lion-face of the righteous—is the fruit of faith, of that spiritual sense to which God is continually present, which steadfastly beholds—

That which shall endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock.

To the old Prophet, to whom revelation was dimmer, less complete, this distinguishing feature of the just appeared as faithfulness to that revelation. To the Apostle who knew God more fully, rather who believed that he was ‘known of God,’ to whom God was revealed through Christ as a Father, it seemed inevitable that an inward conviction such as this should so pervade the whole being as to issue in faithfulness, in obedience to that Father’s Will, in truth and love and virtue of every kind. And therefore he speaks of that inward conviction—in other words, of faith—as the distinguishing feature of the righteous man.

But in either case true faith precludes self-righteousness, self-exaltation. “His soul which is lifted up is not upright in him.” The true station of man is that of utter dependence upon God. The righteousness of man, frail, limited, imperfect, sinful, as he is, falls so utterly short even of that pure standard, which as a spiritual being he is permitted to behold, of that revelation of what is perfect which God has vouchsafed to him, that any measure of self-righteousness, self-exaltation, self-dependence, will be abhorred by the true heart, and the best of men will be ready to lay their hands upon their lips and say, “Unclean! Unclean!”

In using these words, 'the just shall live by faith,' in his epistle to the Romans, as the very watchword of Christianity, St. Paul was expressly attacking the stronghold of Jewish notions and prejudices.

(i) The Jew said in those days, 'I am a favoured creature, — a child of Abraham, and *therefore* a child of God, and an heir of His Kingdom, whatever my life may be. What have *I* to do with a message of salvation? Perhaps, for the heathen it may be needed. But the kingdom of God is mine, by virtue of the promise made to my great forefather. I have a *right* to enter it. I *claim* it as mine.'

He seemed to think that there was some virtue or merit in Father Abraham, which communicated itself by natural descent to his children according to the flesh, and made the Jews, as such, more acceptable to God, more holy in some undefined ecclesiastical sense,—distinct and different from that of being good, perfect, conformable to the law of his being,—than other men. This would have been to be righteous by faith indeed, if faith meant, as some pretend, an unreasoning acceptance of dogmas and mysteries, delivered to us by former generations. But this error St. Paul corrects by showing that the Jew had no such right as he supposed, that he needed the free gift of Righteousness, as well as all others of the great human family, that he, too, was 'concluded under sin' like others, and had no claim whatever, because of God's promises to Abraham, to enter the kingdom as a matter of right. He had, in fact, wholly mistaken the nature of those promises. They were never meant to give such immunities and privileges to the mere natural descendants of Abraham. The Jew must be made to feel his need, as well as every other human being, of a gospel, a glad life-giving message, which should be the 'Power of God unto salvation' to himself as well as to others.

(ii) But the Jew might say, 'Suppose that I admit this, yet, at all events, the Christ was to come especially for us. He was to be the carrying out and realization of those promises to our forefathers, which made us the favoured people above others. You do not surely mean to say that we Jews, the children of Abraham, the chosen family of God, are to be put on an *equality* with the common Gentile in this respect?'

'Yes!' St. Paul said in effect, 'you are to be put on a perfect equality with the meanest of the Gentiles. You will

stand no better than they in this respect—not a whit more *safe* from God's wrath—not a whit more *sure* of entering the Kingdom. No difference whatever will be made between Jew and Gentile, in the day when God shall judge the secret thoughts and doings of men. No special favour will be shown to you as a Jew, to screen you from the just consequences of your doings. A righteous judgment will be dealt out to all, a judgment tempered with mercy, by Him who knows the hearts and lives of all. Only from those, who, like you, have received more than others, will the more be required. The Gospel is the 'power of God unto salvation' to *everyone* that believeth, Jew and Gentile alike.

(iii) Once more, the Jew might persevere and say, 'But surely our Law is not to be done away. At all events, the Gentiles, if they are to partake of the Gospel, and even to be admitted to share on equal terms with us, must conform to our religion, and practise those observances, which have come down to us through 1500 years on the authority of Moses, with the Divine Seal upon them. They must submit to be circumcised, as we are; they must recognize our priesthood and temple-worship, and observe our solemn rites and ceremonies.'

'No!' says the apostle again, 'Faith, simple faith,' a true living childlike faith and trust, that worketh by love, this is all that God seeks of all—no circumcision—no Jewish practices or peculiarities. The formal observances, enjoined in the Law of Moses, are all now done away in Christ Jesus. "Behold! I, Paul, say unto you, Gentiles, that, if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that *believeth*." "The just shall live by *faith*."

St. Paul, then, had to argue thus with the Jews of his time. And it might be supposed that his arguments would be now antiquated, and inapplicable to Christian men in the 19th century. But no! the Judaical spirit has not really died out of the Church of Christ. It has only assumed another form. The same persons, who would have insisted on circumcision, and on the observance of ceremonial laws in his days, would now be insisting on the sacraments, on the maintenance of old traditionary dogmas, on the authority of the Church, on the special powers of the Christian Priesthood to absolve and bless. Whereas, in the light of the new dispensation, all these things are good indeed, when they are

used to bring men near to God, but evil and superstitious, whenever they are used to keep His children away from Him,—as if the infant were not safe in the arms of the Universal Parent without the blessing of the Priest,—as if the brethren and sisters of Jesus could not commune with their Father and his Father, their God and his God, without some hand consecrated by outward rites to bless the elements,—as if the last resting place of the relics of poor humanity were not sacred beyond the hedge, which separates the churchyard from other land! But the principle of Christianity—of that wider Christianity which prevails in our days—is, thank God! the same as that which St. Paul maintained of old—“The just shall live by faith.”

Who, then, is “the just”? “There is none righteous, no, not one.” The history, or rather the story of the Universal Church, from the time of Adam, who hid himself among the trees of the garden, knowing that he was naked,—of Abraham the prince, who fell upon his face before the Lord, and confessed himself to be but “dust and ashes,”—of Job, who said “I am vile” and “I abhor myself,”—of Isaiah, who said,—

“Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips”—

of Paul, who called himself the “chief of sinners,” and exclaimed,—

“Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!”—

of all the saints and servants of the Holy One, who have been admitted to a nearer view of His Face, and of whom “the time would fail to tell,”—the story of them all is mixed, and veined, as it were, with self-reproach, self-abasement, self-renunciation. Why is this? Can we accuse them all of mere pretence and hypocrisy, in the use of such language? Or were they worse indeed than others, less pure, less just to man, less pious towards God? No! they saw more clearly than other men what man should be, what God had called him to be; and, compared with that straight rule, their own failings, weaknesses, flinchings from duty, languid efforts, appeared to them execrable, and with the vigor of pure spirits they scourged the weak and heavy flesh.

But the bright example of Jesus our Lord, while he lived in this world of discipline and sorrow, his cross of love and suffering, his constant vision and witness of the Father, has

made all sin more sinful, all imperfection more intolerable. So that his saints and followers in later days have been louder still in their self-denunciations, and still more severe towards the flesh, the mortal part, which, with all its senses, wonderful works as they are of Almighty power and goodness, they have often been ready to deliver over to destruction, to the Prince of Evil, the fancied Enemy of God. All creation thus, in the words of the apostle, has "groaned and travailed." But surely the time is coming, is even come, when it shall be redeemed,—when the body shall be redeemed to the service of God,—when every sense and faculty shall be raised to its highest value, and dedicated to its purest use in the "kingdom of the Father." Suffering must still be, and love may still consecrate it: self still exists, and for self the cross. But in that perfect state, in which the works of God engross the mind and higher senses, and the pure love of humankind rules over the lower, there will be no need to extinguish a single impulse, for all will be in perfect harmony, as when God first created man and blessed him,—

"and God saw everything that He had made, and behold! it was very good."

To return, however, to the point which we were considering, the self-accusations of the saints, we may learn from them, what St. Paul has tried so hard to teach us, that "there is none righteous, no, not one,"—that human nature, mixed, finite, progressive, is necessarily imperfect, or, in theological phrase, sinful; while to the human reason and conscience a glimpse is given, more or less clear, of a perfect rule, inevitable as the truths of mathematics,—of a light, a purity, which is only fully revealed in happy moments to a few, but yet is in some measure revealed to all, and whose brightness contrasts with their darkness, their stains. The natural impulse, therefore, of the conscious sinner is to flee from God, the perfectly pure and good, the righteous Judge, to expect condemnation, destruction, from His Hands.

But He, our Father and Merciful God, who "knows our frame and remembers that we are dust," has, through all the ages past, by one and another of His children and messengers, whose hearts still longed after Him and sought Him, even from the depths of their own sin and misery,—through them, I say, His Spirit guiding them, has led us to trust and believe that—

"the Lord will not cast off for ever, neither will He be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before Him, and the souls which He had made."

One after another of the sacred writers, their hearts filled with Divine Life, has kept up this strain of hope in a forgiving God; until in the fulness of time He spoke to us by that beloved Son, who knew and testified fully of the Father's heart, who told us that the prodigal would be received with joy, that the daily transgressions, of those who longed that His Holy Will should be done, would be forgiven. Thus we see that the Gospel of God in Christ Jesus, while it bids us abhor and cast off every evil thing, as contrary to the Nature, the Will, of our Heavenly Father, yet bids us flee to Him for refuge, to His Forgiving Love for redemption, not only from evil present and to come, but from every evil past, from all our own guilt and the accusations of our consciences.

Theological writers, arguing from the universal conscience of men, which convicts us all of sin, which threatens most with punishment for something they have done, attempt in vain to persuade us that men, that women, that even children, lovely and innocent as they seem, are hateful to God, are deserving of His wrath, are doomed to destruction—not to say, are doomed to everlasting torment! All the beauties and glories of creation, all the adorable contrivances, humanly speaking, for our comfort, for our happiness,—the presence of the Blessed God to us His worshippers, when the contemplation of His works compels us to adore,—the daily and hourly working of His Spirit on our hearts, and on the hearts of our brethren in all ages,—all these things emphatically contradict the assertions of the theologians, and confirm the words of Jesus our Lord, “The Father *seeketh* true worshippers to worship Him.” How, indeed, should we, frail mortals, ever find Thee, O Eternal One! But Thou seekest us! Surely we shall be found of Thee. Even that sad feeling of demerit, almost of self-abhorrence, in the depths of our hearts, witnesses to Thy pitying Love. For why should we condemn ourselves, but that we have a rule, which Thou hast given us, and from which we have departed,—which Thou hast given us, not to destroy us,—nothing comes from Thee but Life and Light, Pure Being, Health, and Salvation,—but that we may be brought more and more, at whatever cost, into conformity with it? That Law, written on our hearts, transcribed over and over again in the Sacred Books, is written out more fairly still, and still more clearly, in the Life and Death, in the recorded words and actions, of our

Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, the well-beloved Son of God. It is written also in the memorials of thousands of his saints, of men, of women, even of children, who have "lived by faith," have trusted in God, and lived and died in the consciousness of a Heavenly Father's Presence. Nor have they all died and passed away from us. Which of us does not know some one or more, who, with whatever drawbacks of ignorance, want of culture, &c., lives in the conscious realization of the Love of God, in whose heart "the Love of God is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost which is given him." Where such faith is witnessed in the life, however humble may be station in which it is manifested,—is witnessed by kindness, by pureness, by piety, by love unfeigned,—let each of us revere it; let us recognize the handwriting of our Father, though it be but in some little scroll, too narrow far to hold all the truths, which we have been privileged to learn. Let all who love God be dear to us, even though, through ignorance or mistake, they love us not, but count us as enemies, for telling them the truth.

To be accounted just or righteous, then, before God, in the strict literal meaning of the words, could never be the lot of any of the sons of men, seeing that humanity is imperfect, progressive, that the flesh ever lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, and that man has the pure and perfect idea of righteousness, of truth, of goodness, which descends into his spirit from on high, and which is the very sign of his Divine original, the charter of his immortality. For this pure and perfect ideal it is, which makes him ever at war with himself, seeking something higher and better than earth can give him to rest upon,—which begets in him that sacred restlessness, which as the Christian Poet writes, is meant to "toss him to his Father's breast."

But to be accounted righteous, in the sense of being forgiven, accepted, admitted to communion with God, permitted, yea, commanded to hope and trust in Him, as a child in a tender Father, this is our privilege, the privilege of every human being, to whom the Gospel of God's Love has been declared. Only in man can God be revealed to man: and in the Son of Man we have the plainest manifestation of the Divine Compassions — of the "Loving-kindness of God towards man." Christ's pity for sinners, his anxiety to restore them, to proclaim forgiveness to

them, was the most marked feature in his earthly career: and thus he manifested forth to us the Mind of God.

But, being thus assured of our Father's Goodwill towards us, we must remember that to "take up the cross" was the symbol which Christ used to express the nature of our daily life. To walk in the narrow way, the path of life, according to the Son of Man, was a progress towards perfection, involving difficulty, struggle, even danger, implying, therefore, possible falls, wandering, imperfections, sins. Yet it was the way which led to life; and he could assure his little flock that it was "the Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom." It is His good pleasure that we should overcome, though it may be after sore conflict,—that we should persevere unto the end, though the discipline needed to train us for this may be very painful,—that, even when we fall, we should rise again, helped up by His merciful hand, though bruised and sore, it may be, with the consequences of our fault.

But "the just shall live by faith." If we would avoid those sorrowful moments, which leave such bitter memories behind them, we must live a life of faith, of faithfulness. This faith in the Living God, of which we speak, this realization of His Presence, this trust in His Power and Love, is not to be a mere occasional exercise of the soul, for solitary hours, for extraordinary occasions. It should be the root of all our doings, the very atmosphere in which we breathe and move. The only way to preserve our religious convictions fresh and vivid, is to be faithful to them, to translate them into act. All living power only grows by exercise: we cannot create it. Let us come near this day, as many as are thus minded, to the Holy Table to which we are summoned, there to confess our past faults and renew our vows for the time to come, "forgetting," with St. Paul, "those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before," seeking that our faith may be deepened and quickened, that so we too may "endure, as seeing Him who is Invisible."

[No. 8.—Fourth Series.]

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PETER'S, MARITZBURG,

On Sunday Evening, October 21, 1866,

BY THE

RIGHT REVEREND THE LORD BISHOP OF NATAL.

EPH. i. 7.—*In whom we have redemption through his blood.*

THE idea which we all entertain so readily of a perfectly Good and Holy Being as the author of *our* being, the Father of the spirits of all flesh, and the sight which we have before our eyes continually of a world lying in wickedness, of great masses, at least, of human creatures enslaved by vicious inclinations, of greater masses still only raised one step out of utter selfishness by the instincts of natural affection, compels us to look to Him, whom our hearts acknowledge as our Father, as our *Redeemer* also, our Deliverer from the dominion of evil,—as our only hope for ourselves, for our kind, from the tyranny of those lower powers, which we were born to control, but under which so many of us have fallen.

“Redeemer” is, in fact, for creatures such as we are, at once one of the grandest, and one of the dearest, titles that we can give to God. If, indeed, we were beings, whose will coincided perfectly with the Divine Will, and was so much stronger than any lower impulses, that no struggle, no fight, was possible between them, we should not know in ourselves the meaning of the word ‘redemption.’ But because for us virtue, perfection, implies a strife, and the whole programme of our mortal life, of the great drama of existence, depends on whether we, our very selves, will yield or will resist the hand which drags us down, will grasp or will let go the hand which is held to us from above, the centre-point of our

religion must be to believe that that supporting hand is indeed His who governs all things, who framed us and fashioned us, who marked out our earthly career, and knows what is reserved for us "behind the veil."

The belief in God as a Redeemer is to be traced everywhere in the Hebrew writings. Their national bondage in Egypt, out of which 'Jehovah' delivered them, has passed into a lively type of that bondage to sin, of which there is so general, if not universal, a consciousness among us all. One only, who tries the hearts and reins, who has power to touch immediately the springs of thought and will, can be regarded as able to break the chains of those led captive by evil inclinations, to let go those oppressed by powers which hold the heart enslaved. Yet He Himself does not in this moral spiritual world act as an external Power, as our Omnipotent Creator. He does not redeem our souls with signs and wonders, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. He does not reveal Himself to us as our Deliverer by the storm, the earthquake, and the fire, by works of power and terrible judgments,—but by the still small voice of Love. He has taught the hearts of His elect to know Him, and to hold Him forth to a sinful world, as a compassionate Father. Filling their hearts with faith and love, with faith in God, with love to their brethren, He has fitted them to be His ministers of grace to others. He has "anointed" men in all ages, by putting His Spirit upon them. He has sent them forth—

"to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Those words of living power which they have spoken,—those words of truth, which went home to our hearts, and stirred our hopes or awakened our fears,—they could only speak, because God gave them power to speak them, because He first quickened their spirits with life, that they might comfort, instruct, and bless their brethren. Especially through Christ, the Son of Man, He has announced Himself as ready to receive the returning prodigal, as full of tender care for the weak, the outcast,—still more, as constantly present to help, redeem, and save all those who trust in Him, numbering the very hairs of their head, knowing their wants, "what things they have need of, before they ask Him." This picture of the Invisible, this knowledge of the Ineffable,

traced in human lineaments, copied from the countenance of His beloved Son, is that which, received into the soul, converts, restores, redeems from the power of evil. *It is* Life Eternal to know God thus, the only True God, as Christ has revealed Him to us, and as all true Christians now, in their measure, in their lives of faith and labours of love, reveal Him to one another. It is freedom from the chains of sin to receive into the soul the "mild Son of Man" as the Father's Messenger, the Father's Likeness,—and then to remember also that, if the Mind that was in Christ be in us, if we too are striving to be followers of God as dear children, we shall reflect, even we, in our measure, the same bright image, the glory of the Father who dwells in us, "broken lights" of Him, "shining forth as lights in the world."

For how can we know God? Not by regarding Him as the Omnipotent Controller of the forces of Nature, nor yet as the Allwise Contriver, who, by the balance of those forces, brings forth the perfect and harmonious whole of the Universe. Our hearts acknowledge something as superior to power, as more adorable than the most perfect contriving wisdom,—yes, to which these are but tools, as it were, but means to an end beyond them, an end, which these alone cannot grasp, which a Being endowed with these alone could not understand. We cannot come to the knowledge of God by studying the marvels of science, by pondering the wonders of the natural world. We can know Him only in man; that mirror, imperfect as it is, is the best, the only one, in which we can behold the Divine Glory. And in man God has revealed His Glory—in the noble acts of men who have endured as seeing Him who is invisible, who have lived and died for the truth, who have suffered for righteousness' sake, who have poured forth their souls in acts of patient love and tender pity, who have laid down their lives for their brethren. In these, in the daily acts of faith and faithfulness, by which the sons of God are manifested, "blameless and harmless, without rebuke, holding forth the word of life," the Mind of God Himself is revealed to us; the Spirit of their Father speaks in *them*; "it is God who worketh in them both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

But chiefly has He revealed Himself in Jesus, the Son of Man, and in that Divine-Human Perfection, which we think of, when we name his name, filling up in our own

minds the blanks which the Gospel historians have left. For whence could such a power have come to us, of setting before us the pure ideal of the Son of Man and Son of God, reflecting the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,—of conceiving of him as spotless and stainless, in his perfect obedience from the cradle to the cross, in his childhood and youth and riper age, in all the different relations of life, of which the Gospel narratives tell us little or nothing,—nay, of imagining to ourselves what the Divine Man would have said and done, in many circumstances in which the Christ himself was never placed, but in which we are taught to set his example before us, filling up, as I have said, the blank for ourselves? Whence comes, I ask, this power, which we possess, of setting up in our own minds this perfect ideal of the Son of Man, of God manifest in the flesh, but from the gift of God, who thus enables us to behold His glorious excellencies, revealed in human perfection? We think of Jesus as the sinless one, as innocent, as full of love, as utterly and entirely obedient to the Heavenly Voice, as the Beloved Son of God in whom the Father was always well pleased, and as carrying out this spirit into every the commonest detail, as furnishing a model of such obedience for a thousand acts of our own daily life, private and public, family and social, in which we must take part with one another, but in which he never really shared. Whence could have come the very idea of such a character, endowed with such virtues, not the favorite ones of ancient story, but those which the largest and ripest views of what is most Divine, most Human, accept and approve,—whence could this bright picture of God in Man, of God incarnate, partly sketched for us in the Gospel histories, and then copied and filled in by the work of God's Spirit upon the fleshy tables of our hearts,—whence could all this have come to us but from the Father, who would thus redeem us from sin and death by the revelation of Himself? Henceforth we know,—not with the knowledge which comes from microscopic examination of the imperfect relics of the past, (however valuable that may be in its place), but with heart-knowledge, with the conviction which love and trust beget,—that that bright image of holiness, of purity, of tenderness for others, of endurance even to death for the sake of love to God and Man, which only grows brighter and more perfect as the ages roll on,

and which is summed up in the name of Jesus, is the image of the Invisible God,—that he who sees the perfect man, the Son of Man, the Son of God, beholds the Father, as far as it is possible in this world to behold Him,—that in communion with the spirit of Christ we commune with the Living God, we know God, we take hold upon Him, we cling to that sustaining Hand which supported Jesus through his agony, we lean upon His Bosom, who knows every thought of our hearts, who made every fibre of our frames.

But what was the lot, then, of this dear Son of God? Did he rule over nature and over man? Did he live exempt from hunger and thirst, from weariness and painfulness? Did all men honor him, and women love him, and the children of his people sit at his feet, and listen to the gracious words which proceeded continually out of his mouth? Far otherwise, as we all know full well. Often, as life's trials come upon each of us, and the thought may occur, 'I am hated and reviled by those whom I fain would serve,' let us say, yet was not this the lot of the Saviour of men? Perhaps also, at such times, in contrast with our external comforts and blessings, we may think of him who had not where to lay his head, or, in our sense of the weakness or treachery of trusted friends, we may remember the betrayal of Judas, the denial of Peter, the stolid incapacity to comprehend, to sympathize, with their Master, which distinguished those whose names have yet shone out, like stars, in human history, with light reflected from him. And to crown all, he, whom we acknowledge as our Saviour and Lord, whose life was full of love, the bright example of the purest Humanity, died at last an outcast, and sealed with his blood his testimony concerning the Father.

The Son of Man and Son of God had, then, a hard and suffering lot, a bitter painful death. And how clearly does this both point to a glory to be revealed, and also expound our own sorrows, whatever they may be, as the effect, not of wrath on the part of our Heavenly Father, but as the needful discipline for us, if we are to be partakers of His glory! Since the Gospel of Christ has been preached among men, since God has been manifested in the flesh in the person of Jesus, since he, speaking in God's name, filled with God's Spirit, has claimed his Heavenly Father as the Father of all mankind, no one can pretend that the moral attributes of

Divinity are different in kind from virtues of the same name in man, that justice and mercy in God are things *we* cannot think of, things very different from what we call justice and mercy in man, that what seems to us evil may, as some pretend, be good in Him, that good or evil may change their nature at His Will! He has "showed us what is good": the glory of God has been revealed in the face of Jesus Christ.

But before this, the conscience of men bare witness of Him, and of their own unlikeness to Him, of their transgressions of His Holy Law written in their hearts. Imperfect as was their knowledge both of God and Man, they yet felt that there was discord between them—that the creature had departed from the Creator, broken the Law of his being, exposed himself to evils great though unknown, the more terrible because unknown, because of his ignorance of that Being whom yet he felt he had offended. Who could tell what penalties He might exact? Perhaps, the most precious thing on earth. Offerings of gold and silver and jewellery, hecatombs of slain lambs or bulls, nay, the lifeblood of a human being, especially of some innocent child, of some pure virgin, might appease Him! So on the altars of the Great Source of life and being they laid the dead carcasses of His children; for in the moment of sacrifice the precious vital spark was there no longer! How great a corruption of the true, the holy, thought, that every beating heart, with all its flame of love, its living energy, its power of suffering patience, should be at once an altar and a sacrifice to Him from whom those wondrous powers proceeded,—that all men everywhere should "present their bodies," in daily acts of faith and faithfulness,—

"a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service!"

Perhaps, indeed, some of the first sacrifices were thank-offerings, and not extorted by fear and a sense of guilt. Such, we may suppose, were the offerings ascribed in Scripture to Cain and Abel, the firstlings of the flock and of the field,—the sacrifice of Noah on behalf of the earth, when the waters left it to seedtime and harvest again,—even the unconsummated sacrifice, of which we shudder to think, when, according to the story, on the Mount Moriah the Patriarch Abraham lifted up the knife to slay his son. The narrative represents him as considering that perhaps the

awful Being, who had revealed Himself so distinctly to him, and given him so strong a consciousness of His favor, required and would accept the surrender from him of what he loved the best, even that precious child who had been granted to gladden his age,—that the very feeling which he had of a peculiar affection for Isaac, the only son of his beloved Sarah, made it only the more fitting and needful that what was so exceptionally dear should be consecrated to God, after the fashion which the customs of those around him rendered familiar.

Still the “conscience of sin” has undoubtedly been at the bottom of the horrible sacrificial rites of many nations—the hope of appeasing the wrath of offended Deity by the most costly of all offerings, to which the prophet Micah refers in that well-known passage:—

“Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah,
Or bow myself before the High God?
Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings,
With calves of a year old?
Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams,
With ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

The time would fail me to tell you how the practice of human sacrifices has prevailed in different ages in all parts of the world. But you know that in the Bible itself—more especially in the writings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel—we have abundant proof that it existed extensively in Israel, in the days of the later kings of Judah. The introduction of the Levitical sacrifices of clean beasts seems to have been a Divinely permitted condescension, and, as it were, a gradual education of the religious sense, in the people of Israel, weaning them from human sacrifices by the appointment of victims less costly, and whose death involved no breach of the moral law,—rather, whose death under the circumstances gave dignity and value even to mere brute life, which was offered to the God who gave it, even when the flesh was consumed as food. If we could see, indeed, from some higher point of view, yet unattained by us, the meaning, the tendency, upon the whole, of many religious systems and acts of worship, which seem to us monstrous and barbarous, surely we should discern the guiding Hand of Him who shapes the ages as they go, and whose “Infinite Patience”

passes all our thoughts. And much, perhaps, which we only look on to abhor, would appear a step, low down indeed in the ascending scale, but yet a step from mere brute life to that of "spirits conformed to God's Will, and having blessed intuition of His Presence." So these bloody sacrifices, first of men and then of brutes, have had a meaning, have contained a lesson for us, which we are not to throw with contempt away. And so, too, it may be interesting to trace briefly the various steps, through which the great idea of atonement through the blood of Christ has passed in the Christian Church, as the minds of men have become enlarged, especially as their religious consciousness has become developed.

At one time it was supposed that a price was needed to redeem God's creatures out of the hand of God's enemy! The Devil or Satan was supposed to have acquired a right over all, who forsook the narrow bounds of the flock of the Good Shepherd, and trespassed on his domains! This strange Manichean notion has been the parent of all kinds of superstitious fancies. Many saints of God, who with all their hearts ascribed all power and dominion to Him, had yet to exercise true courage in order to defy the Prince of Darkness. Perhaps, St. Paul, when he spoke of "standing against the wiles of the devil," of "wrestling"—

"not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"—may have had something of the kind in his mind. And truly we ourselves, when we feel the strength of temptation, and the weakness of our own hearts, without ascribing any personality to our spiritual foes, have need of courage and of faith in God,—have need to believe that He wills indeed our victory, and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able by His help to bear,—that we may not despair and yield out of very hopelessness. We may, indeed, personify certain forms of evil under the name of "the Devil," as we do other forms under the name of "the World" or "the Flesh," without supposing that these last are really personal foes. But it can add no reality to our spiritual life and inward conflicts, to think of a malignant person really engaged against us and against the Good God, as Ahriman or Angromainyus in the Persian mythology against the Living-Wise One, Ahuramazda or Ormuzd. Rather, it is

embarrassing and perplexes us, as every false unfounded notion must in some measure do.

No! all things, that live, live unto God. All, who partake in any degree of being, draw momentarily the breath of life from the Fount of Life. The presence of evil in God's creatures is still a deep mystery, however we may see a gleam of light through it, and is not at all explained—rather is made more difficult—by the invention of a Devil. God's Infinite Patience alone makes it possible that such evil should be in one of God's creatures even for a moment. But the mind refuses to conceive of a living being, a wonderful Intelligence, wholly and hopelessly evil. To realize the Evil Spirit of orthodoxy, we must for just so long forget the Great Creator and Upholder of all things, His Universal Power and Presence, His victorious all-subduing Love.

The monstrous thought, that the whole race of man had fallen into the hands of this Enemy, who had to be exorcised even from the little innocent babe by magic rites, sprinklings, and crossings, before the Father of all would call it His, or look upon it with compassion, needs only to be put into words, to excite in some abhorrence, in others a contemptuous smile. Yet let us not forget that we have a life-long fight with evil to maintain, though we no longer believe in witches, and demons, and goblins great or small. Let us fear to fall, and distrust our own hearts, and watch unto prayer: for it would be the cruellest of all reflections that we have destroyed ourselves, while God was ready and willing to save us.

But then came the idea, monstrous also, indeed, and immoral, yet entertained by many pure and pious souls, that the *anger* of God could only be pacified by suffering,—whether of the innocent or guilty was indifferent,—that the sufferings of Christ, utterly undeserved by himself, a pure and spotless victim, sufficed to appease and extinguish this wrath, which, though ascribed to the Divine and Perfect Being, resembled truly some fury of the elements, overwhelming indiscriminately the righteous and the wicked in its destructive path, or some bestial thirst for vengeance, which any blood would quench. So it was supposed that the Messiah suffered in his own person the accumulated woes due to the sins of the whole human race, or, according to others, of the number, comparatively small, yet a multitude

that no man could number, who had been elected from eternity to salvation.

We need not combat this notion on grounds either of reason or of piety. To state it is, for us, to refute it. But the fact is that, in the passages of Scripture which allude to this subject, the expression is always, "he suffered on our behalf,"—for our sake indeed, but not in our place, the same phrase being used as when it is said that if he "laid down his life for us," on our behalf, we ought also to be ready to "lay down our lives for the brethren."

Next came the notion, that Divine Justice required the punishment of *some one* before the sinner could be forgiven, that the meritorious sacrifice of Christ, though somewhat late in the world's history, had a retrospective worth, or rather that, in the expectation of it, the human race, else reprobate and accursed, enjoyed the favor of their Creator, received from Him "life and breath and all things." Thus in various ways the conscience of Humanity, impatient of sin, indignant at its own weakness, at its disastrous falls, its deep and foul stains, its separation and banishment from the life-and-joy-giving Presence of the Holy One, has devised schemes of mediation, and ways of return to Him,—the Spirit of God drawing men gently through many devious ways, not driving, not overriding the human will, not dazzling and blinding, with a blaze of light, eyes yet capable of seeing only through a dim and softened medium, but yet leading them by ways that they knew not, and feeding them with food convenient for them. Thus thinking, we reverence and deal tenderly with every form of earnest religious thought, with every method in which living men have sought to approach their God. The truth in them was from above, was from God; the error was their own, the measure of their incapacity as yet to receive the light.

But, surely we begin in these days to realize, to understand more clearly, that great idea of sacrifice which runs through all religions more or less, and is the central feature in our own, appearing there as the voluntary, but not self-inflicted, death of Jesus, the Son of Man, the Son of God, a death encountered for the sake of that truth, which was to be the life of the world, in attestation of those words, which, offensive as they were to Scribes and Pharisees, himself declared to be "spirit," to be "life." His whole life, from the

manger to the cross was one great sacrifice: the pouring out of his life-blood at the last was but the crowning act of that great work of manifesting forth the love of God to man, which his Father sent him to do. By him, says St. Paul, have we received the atonement, the at-one-ment, for that is the true meaning of the word—the “reconciliation,” as the Greek word is rendered in the margin of our Bibles. In him was God present—in all his life of toil, and his death of suffering,—revealing forth His Love to us, His sympathy with human sorrows, His readiness to forgive our sins, and so “was reconciling the whole world unto Himself, not imputing our trespasses unto us.” And when we see this unwearied sympathy, this tender pity for the sinner joined with utter hatred for the sin, this Divine Love of Christ poured out upon the cross in death, with a calm confiding trust in God, “Father into thy hands I commend my spirit,” and with a gentle prayer breathed out for his murderers, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” we feel that in dying thus our Saviour sealed for us the testimony of his life to the Fatherly, forgiving, Love of God,—that in the shedding of his blood, in the Divine Love which bore him on to that death upon the cross, we have the pledge of our redemption by the same Divine Love, the sure promise of the forgiveness of sins.

And from that one sufferer on the cross has a noble army of martyrs arisen, to bear testimony, each in his measure, to the same Divine Love, sympathising, suffering, agonizing, on behalf of man. While they themselves, in communion with Christ, in fellowship with his spirit, have drawn nigh to the Father, to have their own souls quickened with life from the living Fount, they have gone forth, in the strength of that life, to testify the Father’s Love to man, after their Lord’s example, by witnessing for the truth and for the right, and by laying down their lives for the brethren. The very sympathy of earthly Parents, when their children are in pain, is but a faint image of that tender care and love of God for His children, which has been the refuge of sufferers, the hope of returning sinners, in all ages and all lands.

And far from us be the notion that, Christ having suffered for us, we may sit down in selfish ease. If we have any fellowship with the suffering Son of God, the sorrows and

evils of all Humanity are *our concern*. We cannot be true children of God without caring for the wellbeing of man. We cannot taste God's mercies and bounties to ourselves, without seeking to bear the burden, to increase the light, to improve the condition, of our fellowmen, to do our part—if need be through toil and suffering—towards “filling up,” as St. Paul says, “that which remains behind of the afflictions of Christ” for the redemption of our brethren.

